



Preparing Children for Success in School

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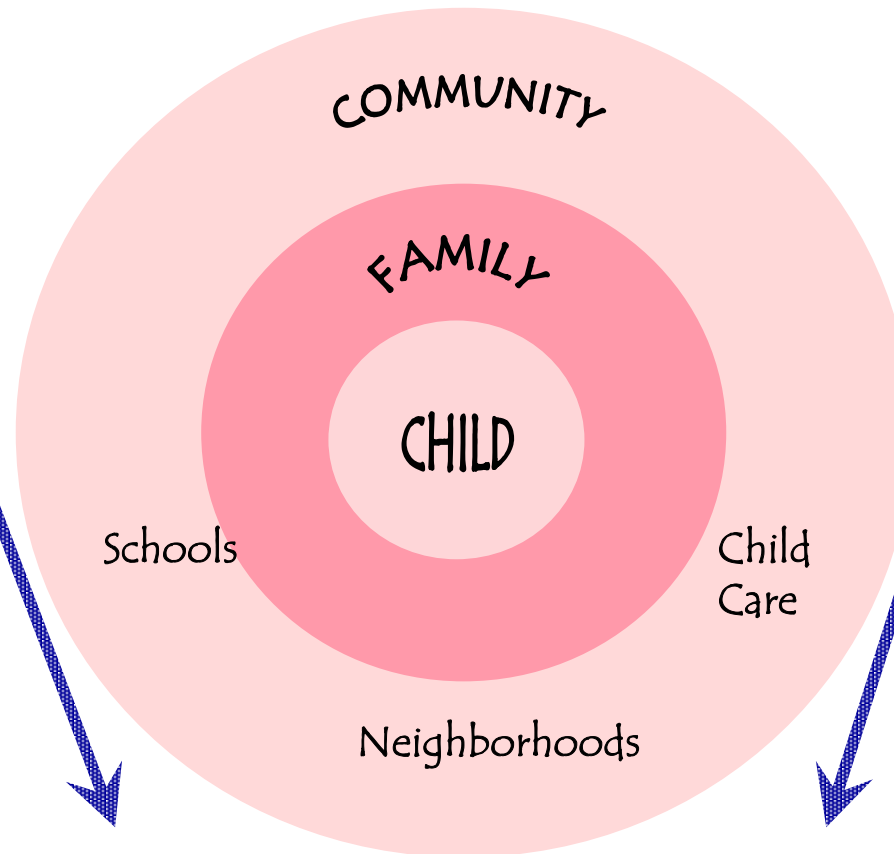
Center for Family Policy & Research



SOCIETAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN

PRACTICE

RESEARCH



NATIONAL, STATE & LOCAL POLICY



- Families
- Schools
- Communities



Defining Readiness

- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development
- Approaches to learning
- Language development
- Cognition and general knowledge



What Does Research Say?

- Entering kindergartners more “ready” in reading and math:
 - Children from **higher SES** families
 - Older children**
 - White and Asian children** (small advantage only in math)

ECLS-K



Home Reading Experiences

- Parents read **more to girls** than to boys
- **Higher SES** parents more likely to read to child every day (substantial)

ECLS-K



Gains During Head Start Year

- Increased **receptive vocabulary** (PVVT-III)
- Improved **letter recognition** (WJ-R)
- Better at applied **math problems** (WJ-R)
- More **color names**
- Better at **counting**
- Growth in **social skills**

FACES



The Central Early Head Start Goal

Provide low-income families with pregnant women and children under the age of 3 with a variety of child and family development services so that children will be ready for school when they turn 5. 0



The Early Head Start Philosophy

- Infants & toddlers benefit from developmentally appropriate interactions and activities.
- Children benefit indirectly when parents' needs are met.



The Early Head Start Evaluation

- Random Assignment at 17 sites.
 - A “program” group.
 - A “comparison” group
- Interviews, observations, tests.



Who Benefited Most?

- Children whose mothers enrolled while still pregnant.
- African American families.
- Families with a moderate number of risks.
- Families at Early Head Start sites with the highest quality services.



Some Cognitive Benefits

- On the Bayley Scales of Infant Development
(a measure of cognitive functioning)
 - Higher mean scores
 - Fewer scores in the at-risk range (< 70)
- On the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
(a measure of language development)
 - Higher mean scores



Some Social-Emotional Benefits

- More positive interactions with parents.
- Fewer negative interactions with parents.
- Longer sustained attention toward objects.



Benefits for Parenting

- Program group parents were rated as:
 - **Less negative.**
 - **Less detached.**
 - **More emotionally supportive.**
 - **Facilitating cognitive development better.**
- Program group parents also
 - **Read to children more often.**
 - **Used more and milder disciplinary strategies.**



Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status is one of the strongest predictors of performance differences in children at the beginning of 1st grade.



Vocabulary

There was a difference of almost **300 words spoken** per hour between professional and welfare parents.



Vocabulary

The professional families' **children** at age 3 had a larger recorded vocabulary than the **parents** on welfare.



... and they could **predict**
with 85% accuracy those
children who would be good
or poor readers.



... the probability that a child will remain a **poor reader** at the end of the 4th grade if he or she is a **poor reader** at the end of the first grade is **.88**





At a time when scientific advances could be used to strengthen early childhood policies and practices, **knowledge is frequently dismissed or ignored and our children are paying the price.**

From Neurons to Neighborhoods, 2000



Young children make **dramatic and intertwined gains** in cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, regulatory, and moral development during the early childhood years, and each requires focused attention.

From Neurons to Neighborhoods, 2000



Nurturing Relationships

Significant **parental mental health problems**--maternal depression, substance abuse, family violence--impose **heavy developmental burdens**.



Children who develop anti-social or aggressive behaviors:

- Get less positive feedback from adults
- Are less likely to like school
- Attend and learn less in school



Anti-social or aggressive behaviors (continued):

- Are more likely to be held back in school
- Are more likely to drop out of school
- Are at greater risk of engaging in delinquent acts

(Thornburg, in press)



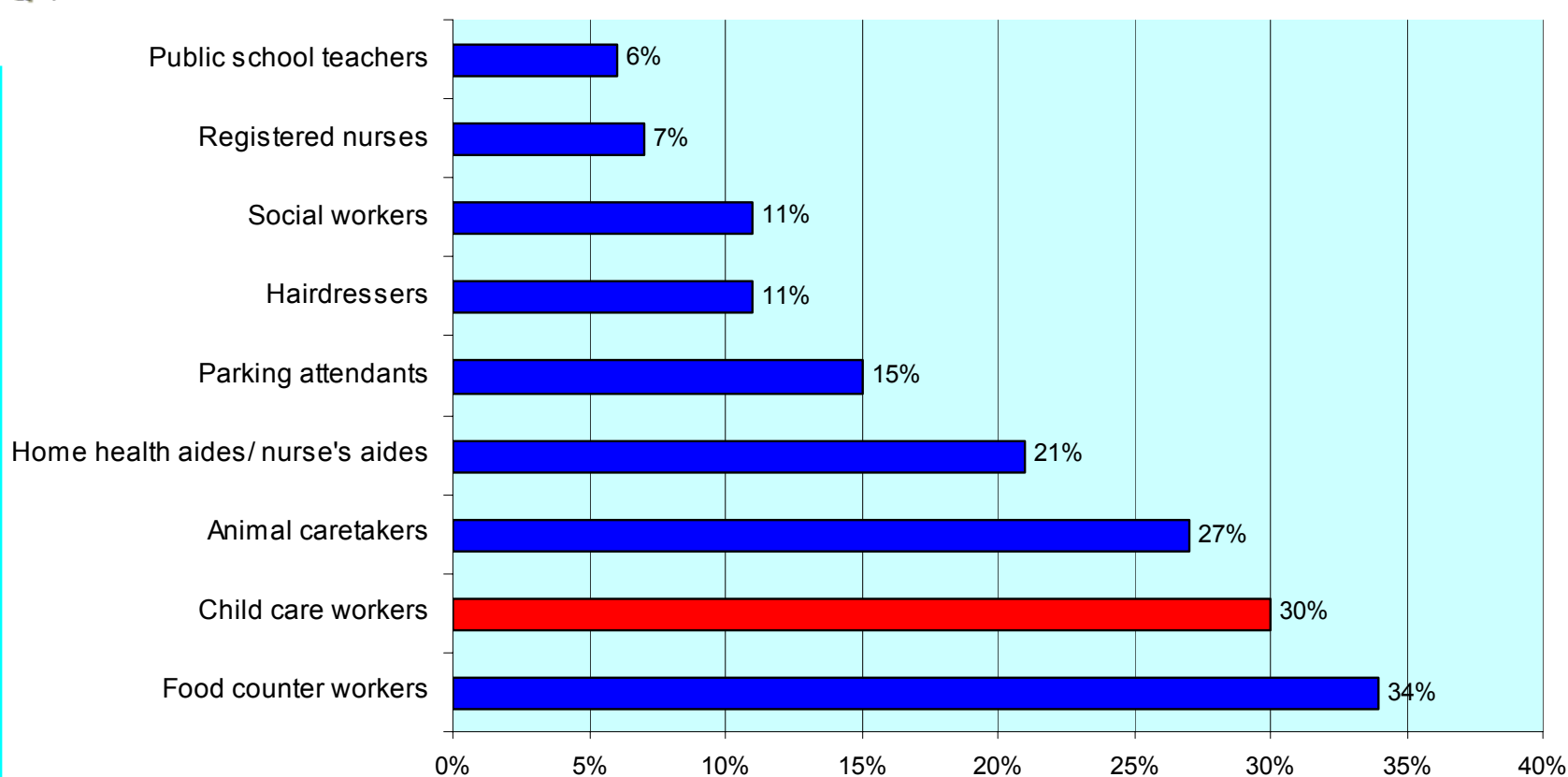
Nurturing Relationships

Young children who lack at least one **loving and consistent adult** often suffer severe and long-lasting developmental difficulties.



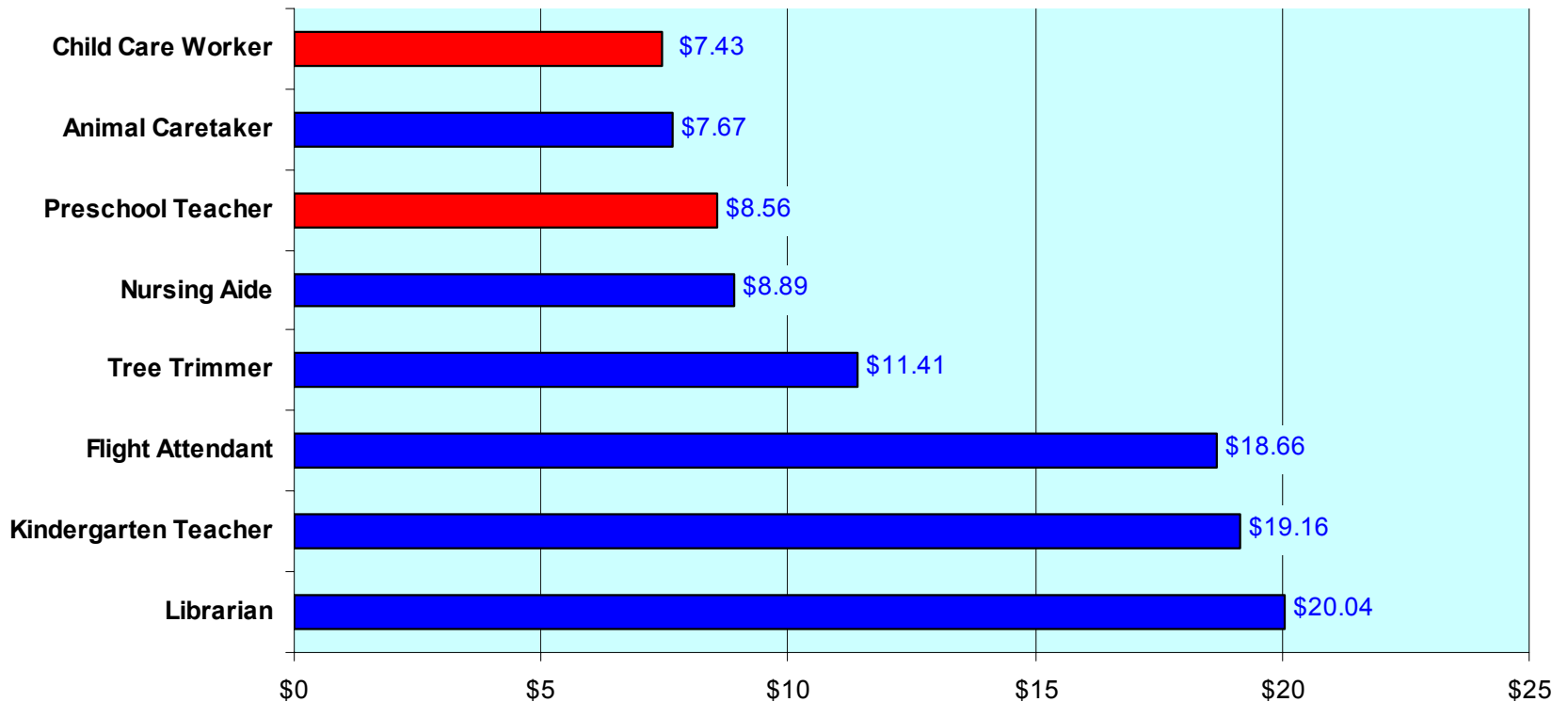


Turnover in Child Care and Other Occupations





A Comparison of Median Hourly Wages (Bureau of Labor Statistics Data 2000)





Wages Survey

(2022 teachers)

Missouri	\$15,000
Nebraska	\$14,720
Kansas	\$13,250
Iowa	\$12,410



...sustained relationships with
caring teachers and caregivers
can help to buffer children
from the effects of problems
or deprivation at home.



Quality Matters

Children who attend **high-quality early childhood programs** as compared to children who attend low-quality programs have:

- Better math, language/communication, reading, thinking and attention skills
- Higher IQ's
- More prosocial behaviors
- Better emotional stability



Abecedarian Preschool Project

The primary goal of the preschool phase was to enhance **school readiness** and, thus, to establish a better base for a successful transition into elementary school.

Ramey, et al., Applied Developmental Science (1999)



Abecedarian High-Risk Families Initially Characterized By:

- Poverty
- Low Maternal IQ
- Low maternal Education
- Single Parent Families
- Teen Motherhood
- Authoritarian Child-Rearing Attitudes
- External Locus of Control

Ramey & Ramey 1999



Abecedarian Preschool Program

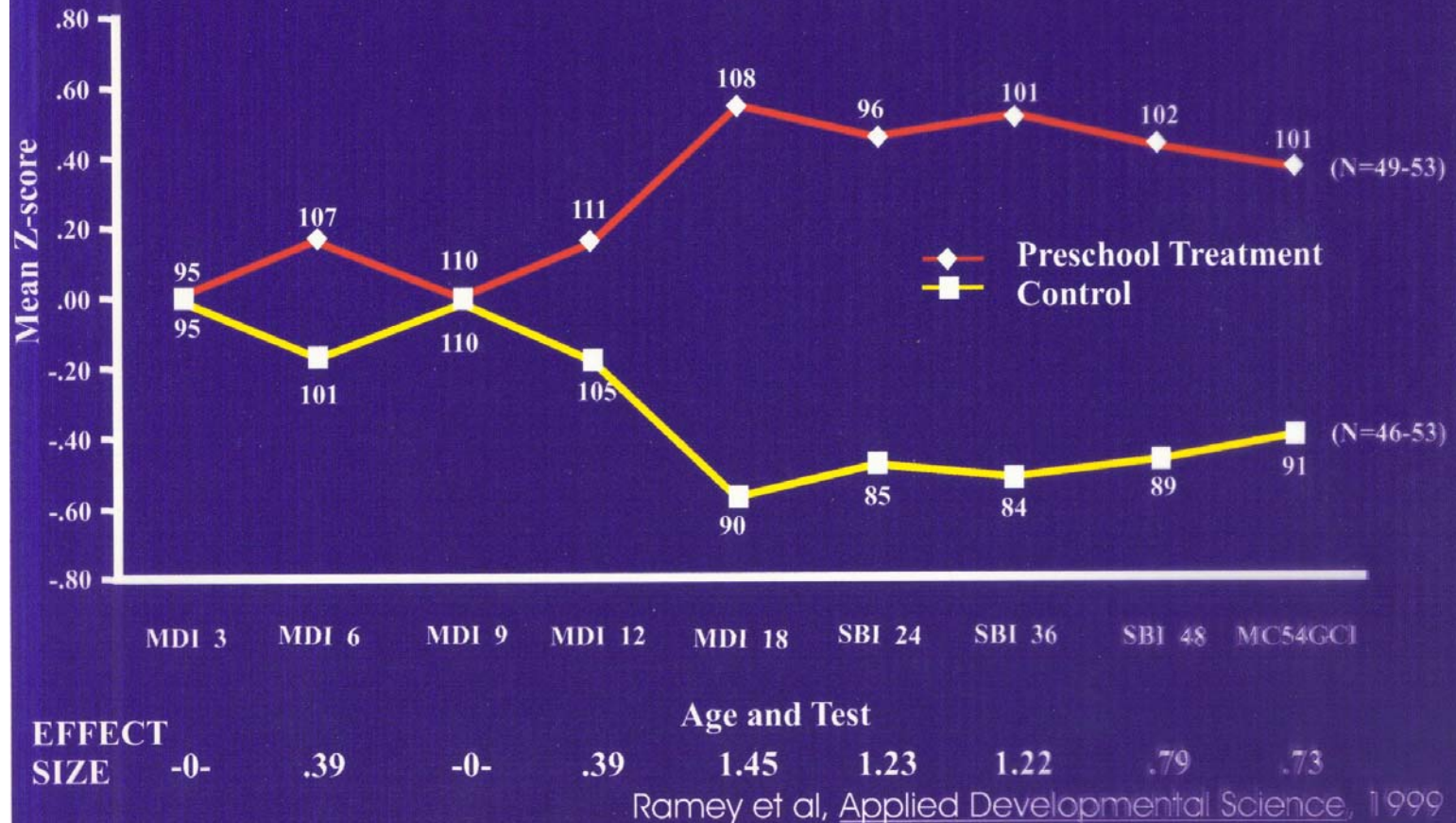
Treatment Group

- Adequate nutrition
- Supportive social services
- Free primary medical care
- Preschool treatment:
 - Intensive (full day, 5 days/week, 50 wks/yr, 5 yrs)
- “Partners for Learning” curriculum:
 - Cognitive/Fine Motor
 - Social/Self
 - Motor
 - Language
 - Individualized pace

Control Group

- Adequate nutrition
- Supportive social services
- Low-cost or free medical care

Mean Z Scores and Standardized Scores for Early Intervention versus Control Children (Abecedarian Project, 3-54 months)





Brief Summary of Abecedarian Results During Preschool Period

Positive Effects on

- IQ performance
- Learning & cognitive performance
- Language development
- Resilience to non-optimal biological and behavioral conditions
- Social responsiveness
- Academic locus of control
- Maternal education
- Maternal employment

No Effects on

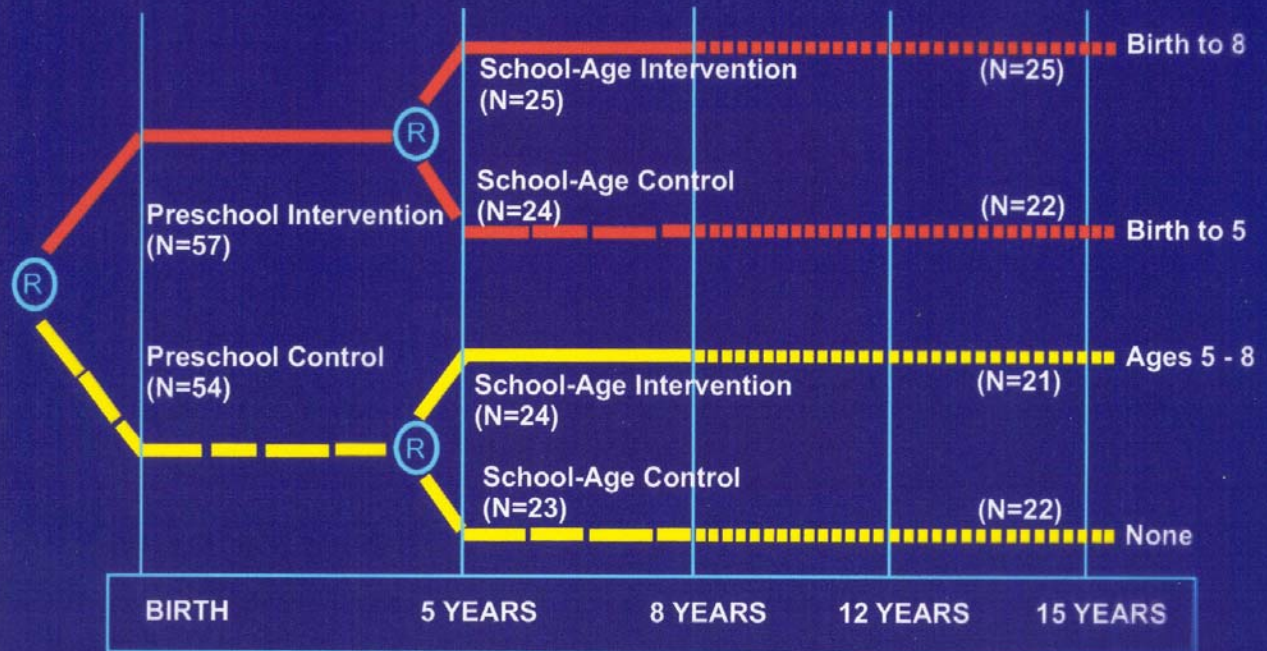
- Maternal attachment
- Parental child rearing attitudes
- Home environments

Decreased Effects

- Incidence of intellectual subnormality

Ramey & Ramey, 1999

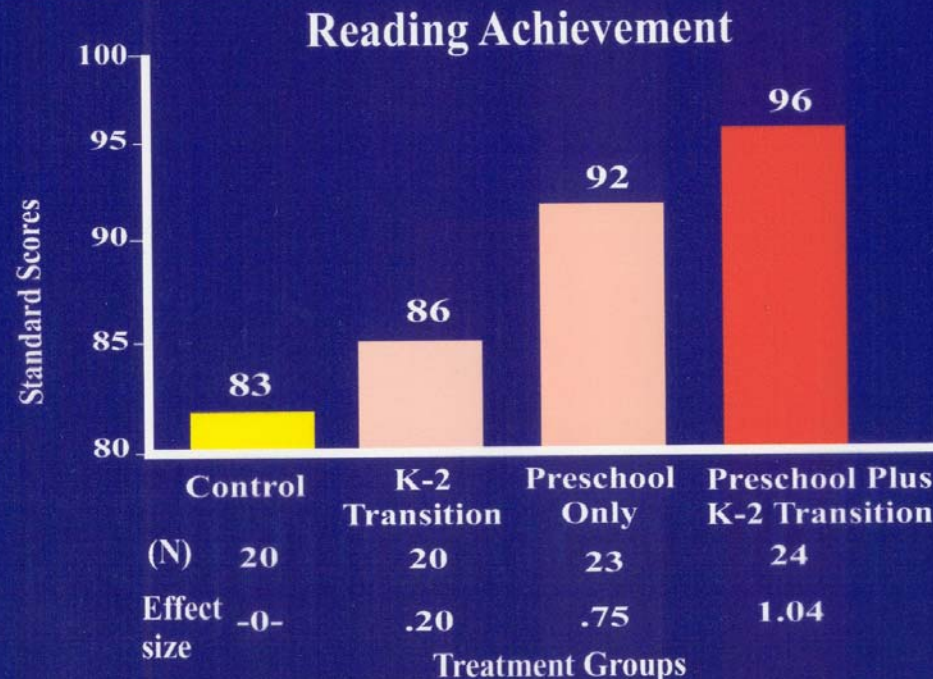
Two-Phase Design of Abecedarian Project



(R) = Randomization

Campbell & Ramey, *American Educational Research Journal*, 1995

Abecedarian Project Woodcock-Johnson Age-referenced Reading Standard Scores at age 8

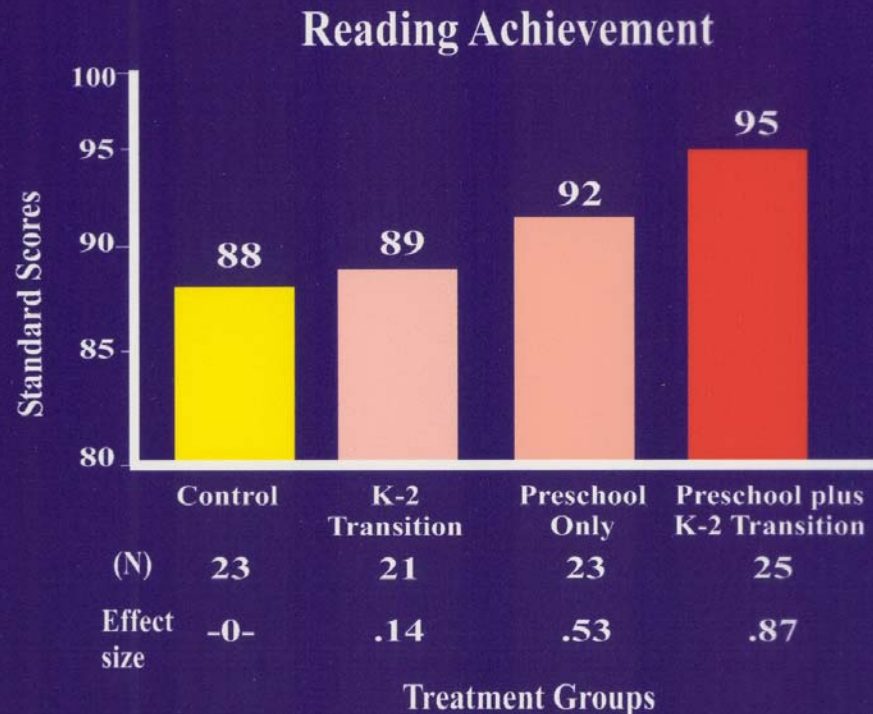


¹ Effect sizes are relative to the control condition and are calculated as $\frac{\bar{X}^T - \bar{X}^C}{SD^C}$

Where: X=Mean, T=Treatment condition, C=Control condition, S.D.=Standard deviation

Ramey & Campbell, in Children in Poverty, 1992

Abecedarian Project Woodcock-Johnson Age-referenced Reading Standard Scores at age 15



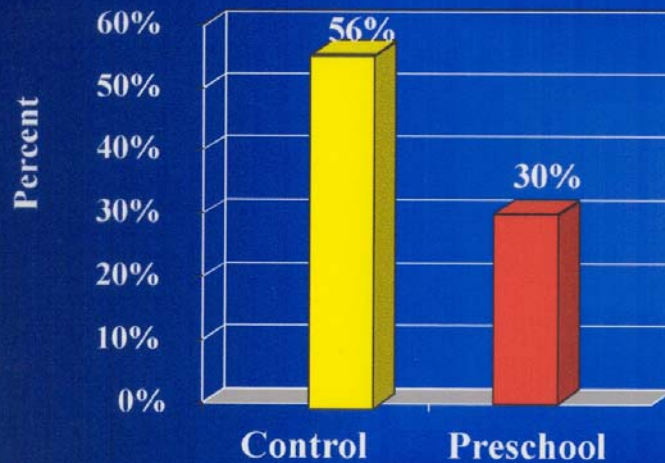
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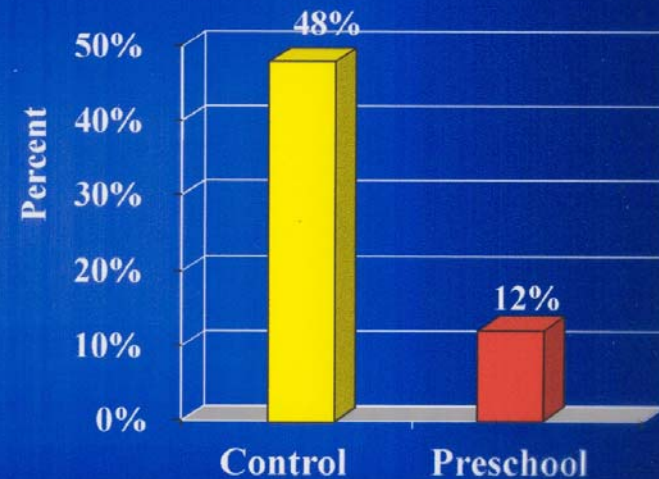
Ramey et al., *Applied Developmental Science*, in press.

Abecedarian Project

Retention in Grade by Age 15



Placement in Special Education by Age 15

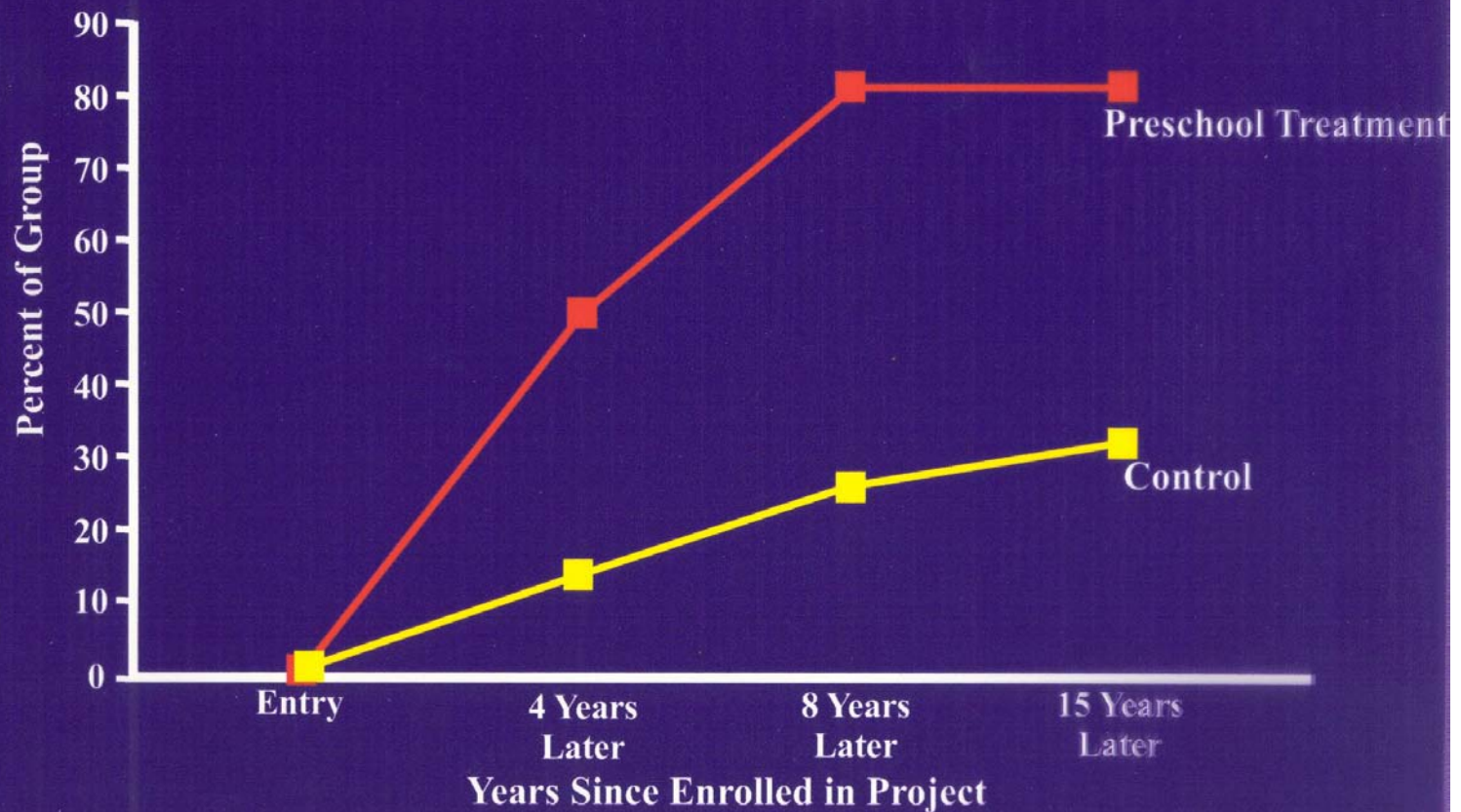


■ Control
■ Preschool

Ramey & Ramey,
MR/DD Research Review, 1999

Abecedarian Project

Post-High School Education For Teen Mothers



Ramey et al., *Applied Developmental Science*, 1999



The quality and quantity of education is the **key to the future** of our way of life and education begins long before kindergarten. Let's begin a **renewal of commitment** to the full development of our youngest children.

Ramey & Ramey, 1999



Chicago Child-Parent Center Program

(Reynolds, Temple, Robertson & Mann, June 2001),
1286 Children (ages 3-9 years)

Comprehensive educational and family support services



- **Preschool Participants** (as compared to comparison group):
- 29% higher rate of high school completion
- 33% lower rate of juvenile arrest
- 42% reduction in arrest for violent offenses
- 41% reduction in special education placement
- 40% reduction in the rate of grade retention
- 51% reduction in child maltreatment



Cost-Benefit Analysis (1998 dollars)

1.5 years of participation-- return to society is
\$47,759/child

Economic benefits of the preschool program to general public (taxpayers and crime victims), exclusive of increased earnings capacity, were **\$25,771/child**.



In 1998 dollars -

Higher expected earnings capacity—28%

Fewer arrests (criminal justice system)—28%

Savings on costs for crime victims—24%

Savings on school remedial services—18%

\$7.10 was returned to society for every dollar invested in high quality preschool experiences.



**Most children do not attend
high quality programs.**

Issues/Challenges:

Is it possible to have **culturally relevant standards?**

As states implement pre-kindergarten initiatives, are **infants and toddlers** left behind in lower quality environments?

Teacher shortage? Teacher preparation?

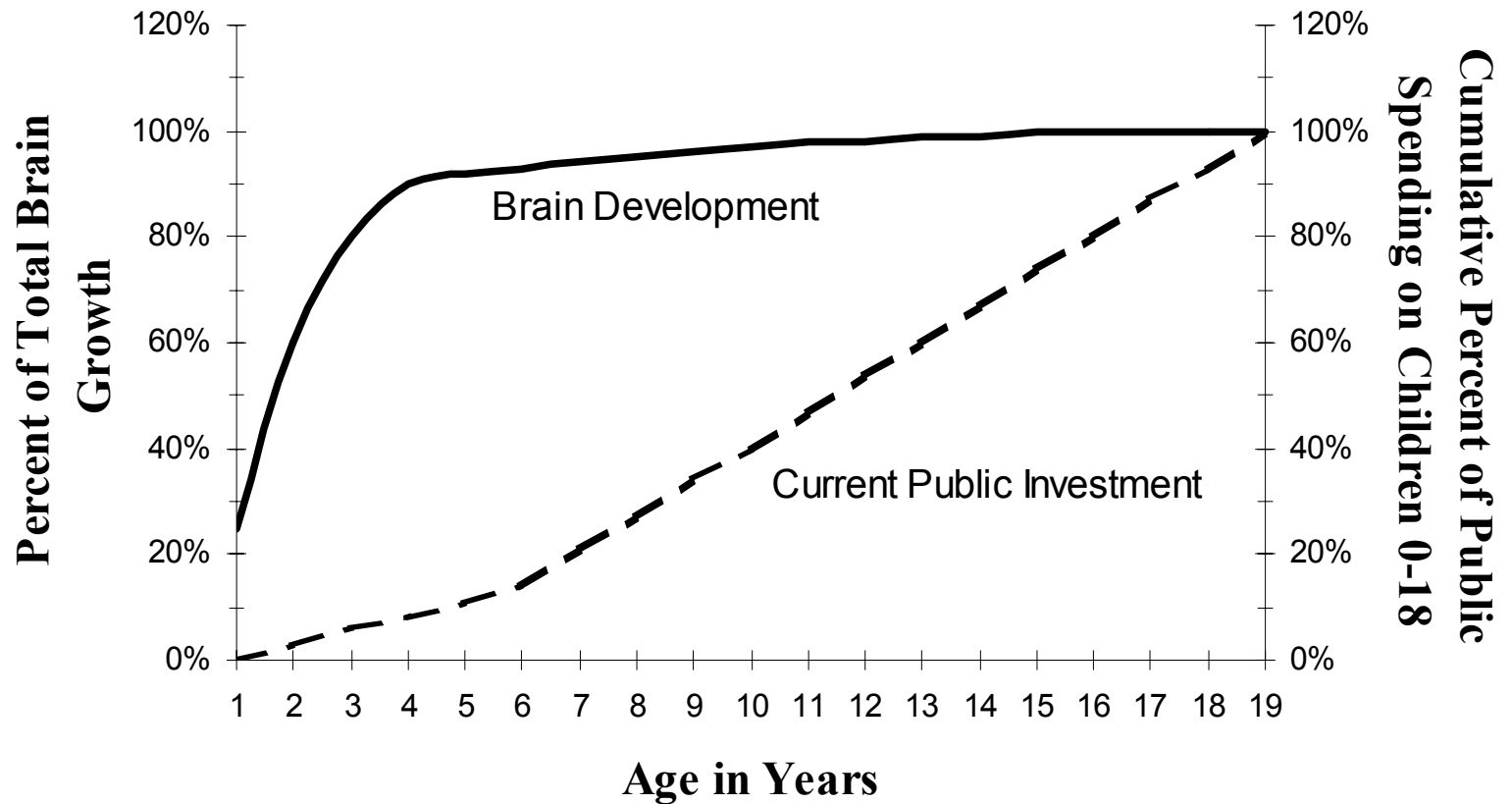


"The current early childhood system is **fragmented and disorganized**, lacking a shared vision or uniform standards."

Shore & Kusnetz, 2000



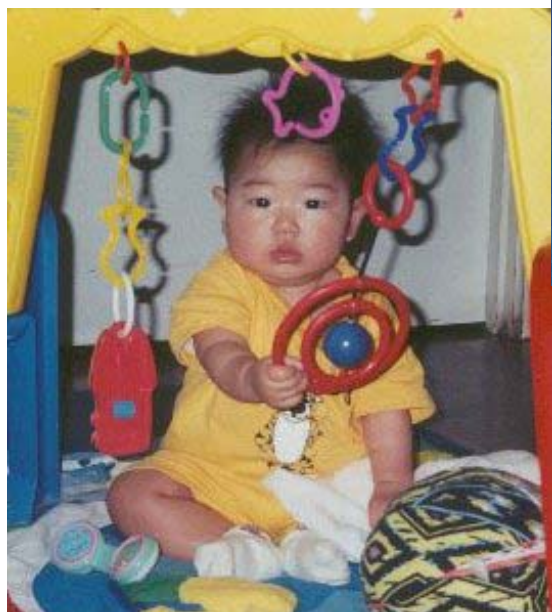
Brain Development vs. Public Investment





"...establish **early childhood partnerships** with parents, businesses, and community groups, coordinating family child care with pre-K programs and Head Start, and linking early education programs to parent education classes, support groups, job training, literacy tutoring, health screenings, crisis intervention, and family counseling."

Shore & Kusnetz, 2000





Let's remember to:

Build a system that gives equal attention to young children's **social, emotional and mental health** needs (equal to literacy and numeracy)

Include **public health** campaigns and **early screening** and treatment



Invest in early childhood teachers/providers:

- Professional development
- Compensation
- Benefits

Make sure early childhood programs:

- Promote **sustained relationships**
- Address **special needs** of children
- Provide **safe and stimulating** environments



Support **families** (consider cultural characteristics)

Stop blaming parents, government, businesses, communities--**we need a shared vision!**



OUR CHALLENGE...

"The charge to society is to blend the skepticism of a **scientist**, the passion of an **advocate**, the pragmatism of a **policy maker**, the creativity of a **practitioner**, and the devotion of a **parent**--and to use existing knowledge to ensure both a decent quality of life for all of our children and a productive future for the nation."





“Our lives begin to end the day
we become silent about things
that matter.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

